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Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
February 19, 2013

**HB 5644 AN ACT REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE OF FERTILITY
PRESERVATION**

Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, my name is Lawrence Engmann, MD, Director, Onco-fertility program at the Center for Advanced Reproductive Services, University of Connecticut Health Center (UConn Health Center). I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony today in support of **HB 5644 An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage of Fertility Preservation**.

Roughly 8% of women who are diagnosed with cancer are less than 40 years old. Currently estimates state that 1 out of every 250 people in the adult US population will be a childhood/adolescent cancer survivor. While the success of cancer treatments continues to rise, the side effects of those treatments are still being realized. For women, certain therapies can cause ovarian damage or failure, early menopause, genetic damage to growing eggs and other reproductive problems. For men, cancer treatments can cause damage to the testes and interfere with sperm production.

Fortunately, assisted reproductive technology provides real hope and treatment to people challenged by cancer during their reproductive years. For women technologies like: embryo freezing (emergency IVF), egg freezing, ovarian tissue freezing, ovarian suppression, donor eggs and donor embryos provide real solutions.

For Men sperm banking is an easy and efficient technology to preserve fertility beyond cancer treatments.

Sadly, even for those patients who have insurance coverage, and more specifically, a fertility benefit, reimbursement for these fertility preserving procedures remains painfully elusive.

Fertility benefits are usually tied to an infertility diagnosis. Prior to cancer treatment most of these patients do not meet the insurance companies criteria for infertility. However it is at this point, before their reproductive systems are damaged by the treatment that may save their lives they must undergo fertility preservation procedures.

The sad irony is that after cancer treatment most of these patients will have an infertility diagnosis but the damage will have already been done to their reproductive system rendering the treatments useless and all but eliminating any hope for a child that is genetically theirs.

We applaud the effort to require health insurance coverage of fertility preservation for insured persons diagnosed with cancer facing likely infertility as a result of a necessary medical procedure. These patients are caught in a cruel loophole that denies them access to care when their bodies can respond, but will otherwise offer them care when it is too late.

Attached to my testimony is a fact sheet on cancer and fertility and the fertility preservation program at the UConn Center.

Cancer & Fertility

What You Need To Know

Did You Know?

- 8% of women who are diagnosed with cancer are less than 40 years old
- By 2010, 1 out of every 250 people in the adult US population will be a childhood cancer survivor
- Infertility in cancer patients is dependent on age, chemotherapy doses, and number of treatments
- 30% of women with cancer never discussed fertility with their oncologist
- Of those women who do discuss infertility with their doctor, 1/2 initiate the conversation
- Only 5% of women diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 40 go on to deliver a child

But We Can Eliminate The Barriers to Fertility Preservation

Coordination between the oncologist and reproductive endocrinologist (REI) is key.

We want you to know about our new program for fertility preservation. The

Center for Advanced Reproductive Services is part of an exclusive group of researchers, The Oncofertility Consortium, that is dedicated to the advancement of technologies that will improve fertility preserving options for cancer patients. As part of this group, we give patients access to fertility preserving options, participate in and have access to the latest clinical research, expand current knowledge of all issues related to cancer treatments and fertility, and are on the forefront of discovering new technologies and methods that successfully preserve fertility.

Together, we can help your patients have a more promising future.

**See our brochure or visit our website to learn more –
www.oncofertility.uconnfertility.com**

The Center for Advanced Reproductive Services

Part of the University of Connecticut Health Center

Part of the National Physicians Cooperative of the Oncofertility Consortium



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